quests for guardian spirits during the years immediately preceding puberty. Post-pubertal quests are never made. Many girls (twenty or thirty percent) likewise observe vigils. The visionary visits obscure spots, mountain tops, or bodies of water. He ordinarily carries an object given him by his proctor, an old man. This object is not symbolic but is to be deposited at the destination to prove his faithfulness to instructions. Activities during the night include constant alertness, building of rock piles, diving in water, and imitative activities such as "playing the stick game with the spirits."

The actual experience comes in a vision, or in a dream which is interpreted as a vision. The visionary is cautioned above all not to fall asleep or even interrupt activity for rest. But a youngster of tender age doubtless finds it difficult to comply to the letter with this interdiction. Yet he surely makes an attempt, for very early in life he learns that a successful spirit experience is indispensable to any valued achievement as an adult, indeed to avoid complete social insignificance. Now the psychological state most conducive to a vision is that semi-conscious condition just preceding actual sleep, or preceding actual awareness following awakening. Add to this the physical conditions inherent in the quest—nakedness; inclement weather (often); portentous sounds of the night; strange, spirit-infested surroundings where even adults would fear to tread; abnormal activity such as playing a game with a row of rocks which may at any moment come to life—and it is surprising that a quest ever fails to result in a vision.

The vision is of a highly formulated nature. The spirit, resembling a man, appears suddenly and speaks, asserting his friendliness and desire to help the visionary to a full adult life. He offers his supernatural help in certain activities and toward general good fortune and health. Before leaving he identifies himself, gives the suppliant a song and, less often, a dance step. The visionary reaches normal consciousness with the song ringing in his ears.

The boy or girl immediately returns home but does not reveal the outcome of the quest to anyone. Subsequent vigils are kept with the hope of adding to the number of one's tutelaries. The quests are brought to an end by puberty, whereupon all of the experiences are purposely "forgotten" and never recalled until the unsolicited reappearance of the spirits at maturity (twenty-five to thirty years of age). This repression for many years explains many aspects of the guardian spirit complex. By the time the spirit returns the individual has found his place in the

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community. His talents are known to himself and to others, and his character likewise. The type of activity which is to predominate in his life is usually fixed. None of these factors could have been determined by the person's guardian spirit experiences for they had not even been thought of since puberty. When recalled after this period of forced forgetting the details of the experiences are naturally, without conscious falsification, reconstructed to fit the situation in which the individual finds himself established. The true situation is probably this: the spirit or spirits do not return (are not recalled) until the person is firmly established in life.[6]

The return of one's spirit is marked by a feeling of lonesomeness or despondency. A shaman "removes" or "captures" the spirit, holds it to his ear to "hear" the song, and returns it to the patient. The song is first sung, or started, by the shaman; the patient then sings alone. Shamans are thus indicated as the effective composers of spirit songs.[7]

The type of power one receives is not the result of a specific quest objective nor correlated with the particular spirit received. Any strong spirit is capable of supplying the help required for success in any activity, including shamanism. But some spirits are consistently weaker than others; these spirits seldom presume to convey shamanistic talents, and even in other activities the help given is limited in degree.

Among the Kutenai the above picture is considerably modified. The range of spirits is even wider, including many inanimate objects and heavenly bodies, but not mythological characters. But these spirits appear in strikingly different form. For the most part they retain their animal-like appearance in contact with man, though to youths they may appear as young men or women. Spirits are generic or specific, the former predominating.

All boys and some girls observe the quest, but adults are also privileged to obtain power. Adults, however, are less frequently successful than youths. The Kutenai quest is not of a single night's duration, except rarely. The suppliant prolongs the quest until success is achieved. This seldom requires longer than seven days. If the pursuit proves wholly fruitless a second attempt may be made at a later time. Before departing on his quest, the vision-seeker is sometimes smudged

[6] Cf. Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 238.

[7] This aligns with Radin's notion that shamans are the effective formalizers of religion in America (*Religion of the North American Indian*).

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The pattern of forgetting the spirit until maturity is entirely foreign to the Kutenai. The power apparently is effective from the moment of the experience. However, the nature of the experience and identity of the spirit are never revealed in words, not even upon the death bed. Disclosure would bring death. Of course the identity is guessed by others through the talents displayed.

The Kutenai do not seek more than one spirit, for power cannot thereby be multiplied. Informants ambiguously state that "one spirit carries the power (not the talents) of all." This may imply that the degree of spiritual power possessed by any man is more or less a constant, the avenue of utilization being restricted by the identity of the spirit. But it is difficult to reconcile the further declaration that certain spirits are more powerful than others. However, this may merely mean that shamanistic utilization of power is more potent than secular exploitation.

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The picture presented by the Lower Carrier differs both in many details and in general form. Only a few boys and even fewer girls seek spirit power. Adults may obtain power but acquisition during early years is more common. As among the Kutenai, the father often selects the spirit to be sought (except that the eldest son makes his own choice) but the spirit desired is not always achieved and the nature of the power conveyed is not uniformly consistent.

The seeker of lay power keeps daytime vigils for a period of a month while the aspirant to shamanism seeks power each night for a year. In each case the intervening hours, day or night, are spent at home, and wandering is restricted to the immediate vicinity. This may appear to be a partial parallel to Sanpoil practice but the resemblance is only apparent, not real. It is the pattern of the vision that proves this.

In the vision pattern two aspects stand out with a prominence which overshadows all else in the complex. First, the "vision" is a dream, or rather a series of dreams, which form both the soul and substance of the concept. Secondly, these dreams are initiated only through the agency of a proctor.

To the south we have seen an old man or parent in a minimal role of proctor, supervising and instructing the suppliant, but the latter always enters upon the quest alone and achieves success only through his own initiative. In contrast the Carrier visionary assumes a distinctly passive role and success depends upon the power and knowledge

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of the proctor.[8] The objective differs also; power or spirit guardianship as such are not sought. It is the ability to dream at will that is desired. A vague store of power is never conveyed, nor is the possession of a spirit of any efficacy in itself. A man can call supernatural power into play for his advantage only through dreaming. And if this power is to be available at critical moments the ability to dream at will must be possessed. Thus the real measure of success in the spirit quest is not the identity of the spirit nor the nature of the power, but the degree to which dreams become volitional.

The ability to dream is achieved by the proctor sleeping with the suppliant under a blanket symbolic of the power sought. The bed is usually made in the sweat house and the vigils begin at about ten years of age. As noted above, lay power comes through sleeping in the daytime, but shamanistic power is achieved at night. The shamanistic aspirant may sleep in the sweat house, but often he goes to a cremation place. This is not that he may receive an ancestral spirit, but that he may come in close contact with the forces of life and death and the influences of deceased shamans. The latter often become the visionary's temporary proctors, so that he may sleep in fact alone and yet not in effect be alone. Often he "awakens" with a start to find himself high on a mountain top or in some other distant spot. But the spirits who carried him there also return him to the original spot.

For the lay seeker, sleeping does not occupy the entire day. Other activities include sweating, massaging with spruce boughs, bathing, and wandering about. This wandering is accomplished in a trance which makes the visionary unaware of his actions or his path.

The vigils are ended and success ascertained through sleeping with a shaman. Up to this point the proctor is ordinarily the child's father. If the shaman awakens suddenly and jumps up shouting, success is indicated. Otherwise the quest is prolonged. Spirits themselves are highly restricted both in number and type. Only a few animals function and even fewer birds and insects. Natural phenomena and heavenly

[8] In discussing puberty fasting among the Ojibwa, Radin makes certain general observations concerning the spirit quest which are pertinent here. He evaluates the importance of the parent or proctor in determining the nature of the spirit experience. He also discusses the degree to which the experience is reinterpreted in later years: "The dream experience formula probably does not exist at the time of fasting in any clearly defined form, but it probably represents the increasing influence of the cultural environment, and the knowledge of those details of the fast that he learns from the generation of his parents and grandparents, as he grows older" (*Some Aspects of Puberty Fasting*, pp. 75–78).

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bodies are not uncommon. Fabricated objects may serve, but not other inanimate things. The spirits always appear in "true" or animal form, but may have certain human characteristics. The conceptual nature and generic source of shamanistic power do not differ from lay power, but both the quest and the spirits are specialized. The details of one's quest dreams and the identity of one's spirits are never disclosed, though the proctor knows, of course, and one's activities provide clues.

Among other bands of the Carrier the above practices are varied somewhat. Jenness provides the following instructive remarks:

> Carrier Indians to the eastward, at Fraser Lake and beyond, made every youth seek an animal protector or guardian spirit, and taught him how he might gain it. Night after night during the summer months the youth wandered away alone or in company with another to sleep in solitude on a hillside, or beside a lake or a river, where an unbroken silence promoted dreaming and the contact of his shadow with the world of animals. The weirder or more dangerous his sleeping-place the more hope he entertained of achieving his quest. Some youths therefore slept on boughs overhanging the water, or hung, head downward over a rock-slide, secured from falling by a thong around one leg; some slept in graveyards, which the Indians tended to avoid on other occasions. Not every dream betokened a significant visitation from the animal world, but only a dream so vivid that it printed itself indelibly on the memory. Then the bird, the fish, or the animal so revealed became the youth's guardian spirit, which he could summon to his aid in time of crises. . . .
>
> At Fraser Lake and Stoney Creek . . . the Indians conceived that most youths were unsuccessful in their quest, that only a favored few obtained guardian spirits, and that these few became the medicine-men able to cure diseases and foresee the future. . . .
>
> The lay Indian (as well as the shaman) did not cease to dream, or to believe that his dreams opened up contact with the spiritual world and thereby brought him substantial benefits. If he was swift of foot his swiftness came from dreams in which he seemed to pursue and overtake the fleeting caribou; if unusually successful in his salmon fishing his success came from dreaming about the salmon; for even the layman's dreams gave him power to accomplish whatever the dream signified.
>
> [One of Jenness' informants furnished this telling anecdote:] "I have never dreamed a great deal, so I have never been a very successful hunter. One season I caught a beaver, not in the jaws of the trap, but with the chain, which became wound round the animal's legs. I do not know why this should have happened, because I have seldom dreamed about the beaver, and never of catching a beaver in that unusual manner."[9]

[9] Jenness, *Carrier Religion.*

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This suggests another aspect of the Lower Carrier pattern. The visionary dreams of many animals, though only one or a few prove to be those he can subsequently recall in dreams. Regardless of the tutelary received, the final dream of the quest series is of the grizzly bear.

The Cultural Role

The descriptions above are deficient in at least one respect. They convey no dependable notion of the significance of each concept in relation to the rest of the culture, or the degree to which the concept molds and influences daily life. There are clues, it is true. The Kutenai and the Sanpoil require universal participation of males in the quest whereas but few of the Lower Carrier take part, many of whom at least partially fail. On the other hand, the dramatic nature of the Carrier quest is impressive, but the venture occupies only a month or a year of a man's life.

Upon first contact with the Sanpoil I was deeply impressed both by the intensity of the role played by the guardian spirit and by the extent to which it influenced the culture. Naturally I was uncertain whether this impression was the result of a relatively greater emphasis by the Sanpoil, or merely reflected my own ignorance of Plateau culture. The latter might well have been the case, but after long contact with Plateau peoples I feel more strongly than ever that the group of cultures typified by the Sanpoil represent the high point of the area in this respect. In another place I have expressed my convictions as follows:

> Perhaps nowhere in America did the guardian spirit concept play so great a role in the lives of a people as among the Salishan groups of the [American] Plateau. . . . Not only was the guardian spirit idea highly developed here as a formal religious complex in which very nearly every man participated, but that participation was no passive acquiescence to cultural tradition. It was rather an intense identification highly charged with emotional content. . . . Here spirits were ever present. A man and his tutelary led parallel existences; the one had only to reach out, so to speak, and draw the other to him when the occasion made unitary action or cooperation desirable. The power inherent in the guardian spirit was not, in other words, a talent once conferred and thereafter effective, or a vague store of energy to be drawn upon when needed; but rather a highly specific relationship with a powerful ally available for personal action in any exigency. . . .
>
> In everyday life this intimacy of relationship was reflected in countless references to one's own or another's tutelary, and in the invariable explanation

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acquisition. This appears to have been a local development among the Sanpoil, Kalispel, and perhaps the Southern Okanogan.[19] The spirit possesses the person, must be removed and "brought under control" by a shaman, then rubbed back onto the person to reëstablish the relationship but not to remain there. This procedure is undoubtedly related to the Thompson and Lillooet practice of rubbing on a spirit retrieved after being lost and the Kittitas and Wenatchi custom in which a shaman may seize a wandering spirit and rub it into one of his sons.

The identification which forms the basis of the Bluejay complex[20] constitutes a final significant example of coincidence of man and spirit.

Objective Elements

From conceptual factors we may turn to certain features of somewhat greater objectivity for further historic perspective. The duration of the quest has been mentioned above. One night vigils characterize the south central Plateau (Tenino, Wishram, Umatilla, Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Coeur d'Alêne, Kalispel) and the Flathead. The Nez Percé and Klamath vigils continue for five days; this may be due to coastal influence. In the Canadian Plateau extended quests are the rule with durations as follow: Kutenai, one to seven days; Shuswap, three days plus; Thompson, four to eight days; Lillooet, two days to one year; Chilcotin, four days; Carrier, each day for thirty days. Extended quests are occasionally observed by the Umatilla and more often by the Kalispel. These data fall into three patterns: one night for the south central Plateau; several days for the Canadian Plateau and margins of the southern area; and consecutive daily vigils for a definite period, the Carrier form.[21]

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The association of the spirit quest with a formal training period for youths, or puberty observances, is found in the southern area of the Canadian Plateau, but not beyond. The general type is described by Teit for the Thompson[22] but it is the Lillooet who carry it to the extreme in duration. The combined spirit-seeking and training for the profession of shaman requires eight to nine years, during which only frequent visits home are made. The training includes sleeping in a

[19] Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 142.

[20] See below; see Ray, *Bluejay Character*.

[21] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 240; Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 138; Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, p. 248; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 95; Teit, *Shuswap*, p. 588; Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 318.

[22] Teit, *Thompson Indians*, pp. 317–21.

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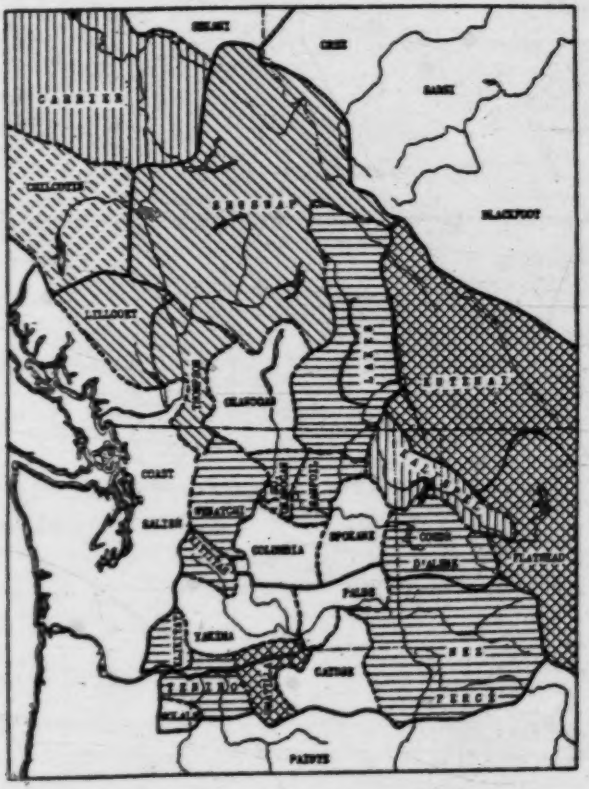
sweat house in an isolated spot in the mountains, sweating, massaging with conifer twigs, attempted trips to the land of the dead, mock shamanistic treatment, and the use of a human skull as a cup. Upon brief visits to the village the boy visits his shaman proctor and demonstrates



MAP 7. Period of the guardian spirit quest. *Horizontal hatching:* pre-puberty; *diagonal hatching:* puberty especially, also post-puberty; *cross hatching:* any age, pre-puberty especially; *vertical hatching:* any age, puberty especially; *broken hatching:* middle age.

his abilities. The proctor may send him back or declare that he has achieved his goal. Among the Thompson, Okanogan, and Shuswap the training is much less extreme in form and duration. The training period

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appears to be a local development much influenced by Coast ritualism.

The age at which a guardian spirit may be acquired varies considerably through the Plateau. Several patterns may be isolated: pre-puberty (minimum age, six to ten years); puberty (range of two or three years); post-puberty (terminated by maturity); and middle age. A practice limited to the Southern Okanogan admits children of three to six years to the quest. In no group may elderly persons hope for success. The periods are not in all cases mutually exclusive. Another aspect which must be considered is the recognition of one period or circumstance as more favorable than another. Two categories are prominent: puberty and periods of crises. Data are scarce on the latter point and little can be added to Spier's discussion, except that recognition of crises as significant by the Klamath appears unique in the American Plateau.[23]

The pre-puberty quest as the exclusive form is noted for the Wishram, Tenino, Klikitat, Kittitas, Wenatchi ("virgins only"), Southern Okanogan ("almost always"), Sanpoil, Coeur d'Alêne, and Nez Percé (?),[24] that is, the south central area. Those recognizing prepuberty as the principal or most favorable period, but not wholly excluding later quests, include the Klamath, Umatilla, Flathead, and Kutenai, all marginal groups. The Canadian Salish constitute a third distinct group, in which puberty is the initial and most favorable time but later quests are not infrequent. Only among the Chilcotin is a premium placed upon middle age as a time for acquiring power. This is undoubtedly linked with the prolonged dreaming of the Carrier.

Throughout the Plateau a wide range of spirits serve as guardians. The Chilcotin share this trait to a limited degree but the Carrier do not. Regional specialization is to be seen, however. Inanimate objects play an important role only among the Kutenai, Kalispel, Shuswap, Thompson, and possibly Lillooet, a continuous distribution undoubtedly representing local elaboration of a more widespread notion.[25] The occurrence of mythological beings as guardian spirits forms an interesting distribution, for the source of the concept is unquestionably the Coast, where it is often the type. The instances are all on the Columbia River,

[23] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 94.

[24] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 239; Cline, *Southern Okanogan*, p. 137; Spinden, *Nez Percé Indians*, pp. 248–50.

[25] Teit, *Lillooet Indians*, p. 238; cf. Park, *Shamanism*, pp. 76 f.